

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany
March 3, 2023

President Biden. Well, Chancellor, welcome back to the Oval Office. Welcome back to the White House.

Olaf, we've—there's been a lot changing since the last year you were here. Matter of fact, if I'm not mistaken, you were here in February of 2022, and Russia was amassing its troops—185,000 troops—on the Ukrainian border. And we made it clear that if he moved, we would both respond.

And together, we made good on that promise that—and I want to thank you, Olaf, for your strong and steady leadership. And I mean that sincerely. It's made a world of difference. And together, we made good on our promise.

You've stepped up to provide critical military support. And you know, I would argue that, beyond your military support, the moral support you gave to the Ukrainians has been profound. It's been profound.

And you've driven historic changes at home and, you know, increasing defense spending and diversifying away from Russian energy sources. I know that's not been easy. Been very difficult for you.

Together, we worked lockstep to supply critical security assistance to Ukraine. And—from everything from—we've done it in lockstep—ammunition, artillery, armored tanks, air defense systems. And we've been together throughout this.

You helped Ukraine meet its basic needs, like food, health, heating. And you continue to give them—put—maintain the pressure on Putin. And it is undercutting his ability to fight this war.

And so, as NATO allies, we're making the alliance stronger and more capable. You've heard me say before that, when I talked to Putin a couple of months before that, I told him that he was more likely to get the—not the—the NATOization—excuse me—the Findalization [Finlandization; White House correction] of Europe, which he was pushing for. More like he got the NATOization of Europe. And he's had that effect, in terms of what's happened.

So a lot's happened since last year. We've got a lot to talk about, and I look forward to our conversation.

Chancellor Scholz. Thank you for having me again. And I really appreciate to be back at the White House. And let me just say this is a very, very important year because of the very dangerous threat to peace that comes from Russia invading Ukraine. And it's really important that we acted together, that we organized our lockstep, and that we made it feasible that we can give the necessary support to Ukraine during all this time.

And, at this time, I think it is very important that we give the message that we will continue to do so as long as it takes and as long as it is necessary, and that we are ready, also, for staying with the Ukrainians as it—as long as it is necessary.

And I really appreciate the very good cooperation between the two of us, our governments, and United States and Germany and Europe. And the transatlantic partnership is really in a very good shape today. And this is very much thanks to your leadership.

So I'm really happy to be here to talk with you.

President Biden. We have a lot to talk about. Well, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

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